tobacco products, Since there is no inconsistency between the provisions of the two, there is no call for amending the Tobacco Board Act and Rules or the functions of the Board. The Board will continue to perform its role of monitoring the Virginia tobacco market and establishing a match between demand and supply.

Bilateral Trade between India and Pakistan

178. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that bilateral trade between India and Pakistan had the potential to touch Dollars 5 billion by 2005 from the current Dollars 800 million; and

(b) whether the matter came up for discussion at the Indo-Pak summit held at Agra recently, if so, with what results?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) During 2000-2001, India's exports to Pakistan were estimated at US$ 185.71 million against exports worth US$ 92.95 million in 1999-2000. Respective figures of India's imports from Pakistan were US$ 65.55 million and 68.21 million. Although potential exists to increase the bilateral trade between the two countries, it is not possible to quantify it.

(b) Prime Minister had raised the matter of enhancement of bilateral trade between India and Pakistan in his opening statement at the plenary meeting with President of Pakistan. No agreed document was, however, issued at the end of the Summit talks.

Problems faced by Domestic Oil Industry

179. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news article "Vyapari Sangathan Pamolein Refined Oil Ke Saste Aayat Se Naraj" which appeared in the Navbharat Times, dated the 6th June, 2001;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the steps proposed to be taken to address the various problems and bottlenecks mentioned in the news article regarding deteriorating situation of domestic oil industry; and

(d) whether Government are considering a proposal to hike the import duty on vegetable oil to 300 per cent from its present 75 per cent?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) The traders Association has requested for reduction in the Customs duty on import of crude edible oil. The Association has also pointed out that the difference in the Customs duty on crude and refined edible oil should be not less than 80%. The import duty on edible oils has been revised upwards three times during the last one year. This step has been taken to provide protection to the domestic producers of oilseeds. However, there is no proposal under consideration of the Government to raise the import duty on vegetable oil to 300%.

Decline in Export Growth Rate

180. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that exports which increased at the rate of about 20 per cent between April, 2000 and February, 2001, came down to just half in February; and

(b) if so, what was the average rate of growth registered during the year 2000-2001, indicating the reasons for the decline and the major areas of exports adversely affected?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) As per the provisional data of